

Development of Recommendations For Revised CX Aging Services Funding Policy

Introduction

The Human Services Recommendations Report for 2001-2003 reviewed all currently funded CX human services some in detail and some briefly. In the brief review of aging services (Appendix B), a commitment was made to review the 1989 Aging Services Funding Policy to determine whether it was consistent with the Human Services Framework Policies and to recommend changes if needed. The policy had been in use without change since 1989.

The scope of the study as described in the HSRR 2001-2003 was 1) to examine the funding policy and the recommended changes based on the Human Services Framework Policies and 2) to review the extent to which human services were reaching unincorporated residents according to need. This report deals with the examination of the funding policy. The second task will be undertaken in 2002.

The Council's human services budget panel, in its discussion of the Executive's 2001 Recommended Budget for the Aging Program, requested that the review of the funding policy be undertaken early in 2001.

Process of Developing Recommendations

The development of this report was consistent with the implementation guidelines contained in the Final Report: King County Framework Policies for Human Services, September 1999. The section on assessment of current human services activities (using CX funds) specifies the following steps:

- Assess against the guidance of the framework policies;
- Assess against the results of countywide and subregional assessments of needs and strengths;
- Assess against other resources available to address need;
- Assess against program evaluation results;
- Incorporate stakeholder involvement in developing recommendations including stakeholder input, internal King County coordination, and citizen oversight through the Children and Family Commission.

Assessment against the Guidance of the Framework Policies

The first step in conducting the assessment was to compare the Aging Services Funding Policy to the relevant Human Services Framework Policies in order to determine consistency or lack thereof. The relevant Framework Policies were (see Appendix C):

HS-1: Regional Role—for All County Residents and Communities
HS-2: Local Role—for Unincorporated Area Residents
HS-13: Priorities for Use of CX/CJ for Human Services
HS-15: Us of CX/CJ for Certain “Local” Services Not Allowed In Urban Incorporated Areas

The second was to research questions left unanswered by the Framework Policies. This was the issue of whether Adult Day Health programs were “mandated” services to be provided regionally. The relevant Framework Policy in this area was HS-14: CX/CJ not to be used in “Mandated” Service Areas.

The third was to develop a set of recommendations that would address issues raised. While for 2002, the County will be reducing community based human services funded from the Current Expense fund; the recommended policies needed to be broad enough that they could direct increases as well as decreases in funding.

Local Services

In 2001 County current expense funds were supporting senior centers, adult day health facilities, advocacy, outreach, housing services, volunteer chore services, some nutrition services, and volunteer opportunities for seniors (Appendix D). Except for senior centers and adult day health facilities and advocacy, the other services that the County was providing in 2001 had been funded as a result CSD’s competitive Request for Proposals held in March 2000.

Senior Centers

The Framework Policies had clearly placed Senior Centers in the category of local services but had not been able to resolve the question of whether Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care Services were local or regional services. Other services for seniors were not specifically addressed in the Framework Policies Report.

The Aging Services Funding Policy in use since 1989 (Appendix E) funded senior centers in the unincorporated County and in small cities. When a city where a center was located reached 12,000 population, county funding was reduced over a two-year transition period. The Framework Policies clearly state that county funding of local services is for the benefit of unincorporated residents not for the benefit of residents of municipalities. The recommended change is that funding continue to be provided for senior centers which are located where they can serve neighboring unincorporated areas both rural and urban. In 2002 and beyond centers must demonstrate that they do serve unincorporated areas and must obtain funding from municipalities served that have a population of 12,000 or more.

Consistent with the Framework Policy HS-15, King County will no longer provide CX funds to support senior centers that are located in municipalities that do not have unincorporated areas at their boundaries.

The framework policies direct that the county's local human services role is about provision of access to services for unincorporated residents, according to need. The rationale of the existing funding policy is that senior centers were funded as a venue for a range of services for the aging population. This rationale is consistent with the framework policies. The revised policy requires that the centers provide access to a defined range of services in order to continue to receive county funding.

Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care

The Framework Policies Report questioned whether Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care was a regional or local service. In some ways it is both. The Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care facilities funded by King County also receive funding from the major regional funders DSHS-Medicaid and the Area Agency on Aging which administers Federal Older Americans Act and State Senior Citizens Act funding. The facilities, however, are locally organized and operated and are most often associated with the senior centers funded by the County.

County funds are not used to support clients who are eligible to receive funding through the regional funders. County funds support a population that is medically similar to those who are regionally funded: very old, frail, in need of rehabilitative services, and at risk of needing 24 hour institutional care if the day care is not available. These clients are low-income and meet the Medicaid income threshold. Their assets exceed the threshold, making them ineligible for government subsidies. The client or caregiver pays as much as they can per day (average payment is \$34), based on a sliding scale fee schedule. County funds and provider fundraising make up the difference in cost up to the current average rate of \$55 a day (Appendix F).

The 1989 funding policy embraced adult day centers for their role in preventing isolation of seniors in rural areas and funded centers that were associated with the county funded senior centers. The proposed funding policy would continue to provide funding to adult day health and adult day care facilities in areas adjacent to unincorporated areas, both rural and urban, on the same basis as the senior centers i.e. a minimum service level for unincorporated residents. Further, the County would continue to provide specialized care for those with Alzheimer's disease at the only facility that has a program for those in the advanced stages of the disease as long as space is set aside for unincorporated area residents.

Consistent with Framework Policy HS-15 King County will no longer provide CX funds to Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care facilities in municipalities that do not have unincorporated territory on their boundaries, except for the Alzheimer's care cited above.

Other Services

The current policy provides guidance on other services in that they will be supported as extensions of basic County-supported services and must be targeted towards vulnerable elders who reside in areas served by County-funded agencies. The proposed policy contains a broad clause which focuses on support for services which promote or increase access to services by residents of unincorporated King County, according to need.

The intent of the proposed policy is to reserve the capacity to:

- Fund services other than Senior Centers and Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care according to the broad criteria that local services must benefit unincorporated residents according to need; and
- Provide funding to support the other county human services roles specified in the Framework Policies—planning and advocacy; partnerships for development, design and implementation of better services; and resource development.

Underlying this policy is the assumption that the needs of and service priorities for unincorporated seniors will change over time. Review of these needs will result in a periodic shift in the emphasis of services.

In 2001, the “other services” category of services was found to include at least one service that benefited only incorporated residents. It is likely that the financial situation of the County will result in elimination of some additional services that are low priorities according to the needs that have already been reviewed in the Community Services Division Strategic Plan and the Area Agency on Aging Four Year Plan.

Assessment Against the Results of Countywide and Subregional Assessments of Needs and Strengths.

The Framework Policies in HS-13 establish priorities for the use of CX/CJ funds for human services. The priority that addresses local services states “to help provide access to a basic array of human services for residents of unincorporated King County, according to need.” The use of the phrase “according to need” contrasts with the priority for regional services which is to help assure access to services for persons “most in need, regardless of where they live.” In reviewing the results of countywide and subregional assessments, the standard used for aging services was that there was a demonstrated need for the services provided. Only when choices based on available funds had to be made for 2002 was there any consideration of the ranking of the need(s) addressed by a service.

As a Sponsor of the Area Agency of Aging (AAA), King County's role is to be involved in the countywide coordination of funding for aging services. As the Area Agency on Aging for King County, the City of Seattle Aging and Disability Services administers federal, state and local funds for services for older people and adults with disabilities. The AAA is responsible for funding services which fulfill the priorities in the Older Americans Act and the State Senior Citizens Act. The KC Department of Community and Human Services Director represents the entire county outside the city of Seattle.

The Area Plan on Aging 2000-2003, developed by Aging and Disability Services, provides guidance on allocating AAA discretionary funding for aging services region-wide. The Area Plan established four issue areas as priority needs. The issue areas are Health, Long Term Care, Housing and Family Caregivers. These issue areas are to be addressed through objectives that were established through the planning and review process conducted by Aging and Disability Services. County CX services are complementary in that they address Long Term Care and Family Caregiver issues for the benefit of unincorporated residents through Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care services. CX services directly address two of these issues: Long Term Care and Family Caregivers. The remaining two issues will be reviewed as part of the process for determining what services should be included in the broad array of services that must be accessible through senior centers.

The King County Community Services Division Strategic Plan highlighted issues from seven sub-regions of King County. Results from phone surveys with statistically valid samples from all of the sub-regions revealed that transportation and affordable housing are issues common to all groups, including seniors. The findings from these interviews indicated that transportation was a region-wide concern, as lack of transportation can be a major hurdle to accessing services. The phone survey process was thorough and extensive. As a result, the data collected was considered to be relevant for review as part of this assessment.

Follow-up on the survey resulted in the identification of more specific issues for seniors. One of the recommendations presented would allow us to use CX funding to address rural transportation issues related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. These transportation issues are difficult for King County Metro to address because of limitations on the use of ADA funds.

Assessment Against Other Resources Available to Address Need

The difficult financial situation of Adult Day Health and Adult Day Care Services has been highlighted in the recent state legislative session where the Medicaid funding, which is discretionary on the part of Washington State, was proposed to be cut 50% by the Governor, 25% by the House of Representatives and not at all by the Senate. Due to successful advocacy efforts, the Governor recently signed an operating budget that fully funds adult day health. There is clearly a need for

continued advocacy for reasonable funding levels, Medicaid reimbursement of the full cost of services, and appropriate recognition of ADH as a part of the spectrum of community long term care services. Continued funding of the Washington Adult Day Services Association is recommended in order to fulfill the County's advocacy role in this service area. The policy recommends continued funding for this program area until such time as resources are adequate to support ADH in unincorporated areas. Currently the centers depend heavily on County funds to continue to operate.

The findings that other resources are available to senior centers in cities of 12,000 or more led to the proposed requirement that centers in cities of 12,000 or more must receive some city funding in order to continue to receive county funding. This is consistent with HS-17: Promoting Regional Participation in Human Services.

Assessment Against Program Evaluation Results

The Community Services Division had not recently done any formal program evaluation of aging services. Evaluation of senior centers had been scheduled for 2001 but staff resources were not available to do both the evaluation and the policy development. The evaluation will be postponed until agreement is reached about the range of services that need to be accessed through Senior Centers, and until the new/common standards for reporting activity and outcomes have been developed by the providers and the County. Both of these changes are required in the proposed policy. The development of outcome based performance measures for all programs are also required.

The Adult Day Health facilities affiliated with Senior Services of King County have developed outcome based performance standards and the first year's data was reviewed. The standards were appropriate to the type of services provided and the results were positive for those served.

Involvement of Stakeholders in Development of Recommendations

The involvement of stakeholders in the development of recommendations is described in Appendix G. The major themes included concern for a strong representation of municipalities, as well as unincorporated areas, at the AAA; the roles of King County, the AAA, and municipalities; and clarification on establishing an appropriate target for serving unincorporated residents. As a result of feedback received, the section on Advocacy in the proposed ordinance was changed to strengthen the importance of the County's regional role on the AAA.

Recommendations for King County's Role in the Aging Services System

It is recommended that King County continue to support the infrastructure and services in the aging services system as follows:

- Continue provision of local services consistent with HS-2: Local Role
- Continue funding senior centers to provide access to a broad range of services, consistent with HS-15: Use of CX/CJ for certain “local services” not allowed in incorporated areas
- Continue to support adult day services as a local service until regional funding is adequate to serve the needs unincorporated residents consistent with HS-2
- Fund other services according to need, consistent with HS-13: Priorities for use of CX/CJ for Human Services
- Strengthen other human services roles enumerated in the Framework Policies, with emphasis on advocacy
- 2001 –2003 Priorities:
 - Advocacy for full funding of Adult Day Health as a long term care option
 - Advocacy for transportation options for the real needs of seniors, especially those outside of the County ADA boundary.